

REMARKS

STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-2 and 5-17 have been pending in the application.

Claims 5, 7, 8, and 10-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Suzuki et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,736,982).

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Liles et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,880,731).

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shiio et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,491,743) in view of Suzuki et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,736,982).

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shiio and Suzuki in view of knowledge well known in the art.

Claims 6 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki in view of knowledge well known in the art.

Claims 14-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki in view of Shiio.

Claims 1, 5, 8, 10, 11 and 12 are amended, claim 9 is cancelled without disclaimer or prejudice, and, thus, claims 1-2, 5-8 and 10-17 remain pending for reconsideration, which is respectfully requested.

No new matter has been added in this Amendment.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

Pending independent claims are 1, 5, 10, 11 and 12.

INDEPENDENT CLAIMS 5 and 10-12

Independent claims 5 (including dependent claims 7, 8) and 10-12 are rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Suzuki, which is newly relied upon.

Independent claims 5 and 10-12, using claim 5 as an example, are amended for clarity, as follows:

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An administration device used in a chat system having a plurality of chat devices which share any of virtual chat spaces being configured on a network and which send and receive messages among themselves, comprising:

an association table that relationally stores a predetermined event occurring in a chat space with participating chat devices, and ~~a corresponding plurality of predetermined different predetermined correlated operation instructions that correspond to the predetermined event~~, the plurality of predetermined different correlated operation instructions correspond ~~corresponding~~ to a plurality of different chat device destinations ***to operate image representations and/or physical representations*** of chat participants that are ***linked to or installed in the chat device destinations***,

a chat event detector detecting a predetermined event in the chat space, based on the association table,

an operation instruction determiner determining the plurality of the different operation instructions for the detected event, based on the association table,

a destination determiner determining the corresponding plurality of the different chat device destinations to be transmitted the determined plurality of the different operation instructions, based on the association table, and

a transmitter transmitting the determined plurality of the different operation instructions via the chat system to the determined corresponding chat device destinations to operate the image representations and/or the physical representations of the chat participants that are linked to or installed in the chat device destinations.

The Applicants respectfully disagree with the Office Action rejection rationale over Suzuki, because the claimed present invention provides a plurality of ***different correlated avatar operation instructions that correspond to a specific event to operate the avatars "linked to or installed in the chat device destinations"*** (see, page 6, lines 1-2 and FIG. 3, of the present Application, which discloses in FIG. 3: "participate in channel" event and "ARM(RIGHT) UP 5" and "HEAD DOWN" as "***different correlated operations instructions ... to operate image representations and/or physical representations of chat participants that are linked to or installed in the chat device destinations,***" amended independent claim 5).

The Office Action rejection relies on Suzuki, FIG. 7, table 12E (management table memory), to reject the claimed present invention's "an association table." However, a detailed review of Suzuki, FIGS. 7 and 8 and column 7, suggests that Suzuki fails to disclose or suggest the claimed present invention's, "an association table that stores ... a ~~corresponding-plurality of~~ ... ***different predetermined-correlated operation instructions that correspond to the predetermined event ... to operate image representations and/or physical representations of chat participants that are linked to or installed in the chat device destinations.***" In Suzuki, FIG. 8 shows a structure of the management table memory 12E, which identifies for each avatar AD1-AD3 in a virtual space, a change flag, a state flag, a coordinate value, and a direction of eye. According to Suzuki, column 7, lines 46-57:

The CPU 12C always monitors the change flag CFLG in the management table memory 12E and, upon detecting a change in the data stored corresponding to the avatar A1 of the user U1 (CFLG=1), instructs the video image generating part 12G to separately generate the visual field image in the virtual field to be displayed and the other avatar images to be contained therein and displays them on the display 13, thereafter resetting the change flag CFLG.

Therefore, in Suzuki's table 12E, even if the change flag or a status flag are deemed as an event, Suzuki does not provide "a ~~corresponding-plurality of~~ ... ***different predetermined correlated operation instructions that correspond to the predetermined event ... to operate image representations and/or physical representations of chat participants that are linked to or installed in the chat device destinations,***" because Suzuki only changes the virtual scene that the avatars are observing in the virtual space in response to a change flag or a status flag.

In particular, when a change flag changes, with respect to other avatars, Suzuki, in column 7, lines 53-57, expressly discloses:

When it is detected that the change flag of **another** avatar is "1," only its avatar image is updated on the basis of the updated coordinate position COV and direction of eyes, after which the change flag CFLG is reset.

Therefore, Suzuki only updates a virtual space scene that an avatar is observing based upon movement of other avatars in the virtual space, which differs from the claimed present invention, "a corresponding plurality of ... ~~different predetermined~~ **correlated operation instructions that correspond to the predetermined event** ... **to operate image representations and/or physical representations of chat participants** that are **linked to or installed in the chat device destinations.**"

In other words, Suzuki updates a virtual space scene that an avatar is observing based upon movement of other avatars in the virtual space, which the Office Action rejection rationale also acknowledges in page 3, 2nd and 3rd paragraphs, but this differs from the claimed present invention's "a corresponding plurality of ... ~~different predetermined~~ **correlated operation instructions that correspond to the predetermined event** ... **to operate image representations and/or physical representations of chat participants** that are **linked to or installed in the chat device destinations.**" Changing a viewing space of an avatar differs from the claimed present invention's "**different correlated operation instructions ... to operate image representations and/or physical representations of chat participants ... linked to or installed in the chat device destinations.**" The Suzuki FIGS. 4A-C, 9A-9F and FIGS. 25-26 all relate to controlling visual field image of an avatar, but fail to disclose or suggest reciprocally/in correlation/complementarily (i.e., "**different correlated operation instructions**") controlling **operations** of a plurality of avatars based upon an event. Further, Suzuki fails to disclose or suggest the claimed present invention's, "**to operate image representations and/or physical representations of chat participants ... linked to or installed in the chat device destinations.**" In other words, Suzuki **updates a virtual space scene** by **detecting a change occurred to an individual user** in the virtual space scene as a trigger, while the claimed present invention **operates a character** (an image or physical representation) "linked to or installed **in the chat device destinations,**" by detecting **a change in a virtual channel** that includes a plurality of users.

Further, the Examiner appears to be relying on Suzuki's FIG. 5 and column 5, lines 50-67. However, Suzuki's FIG. 5, table memory 53, discloses each avatar's position and eye direction, but fails to disclose or suggest the claimed present invention's, "a corresponding plurality of ... **different predetermined-correlated operation instructions that correspond to the predetermined event ... to operate image representations and/or physical representations of chat participants** that are ***linked to or installed in the chat device destinations.***" Further, Suzuki controls audio and video channels connections among the avatars according to avatar positions based upon the table 53. Even if in view of column 12 in Suzuki, the audio and video channel connection control is different for various avatars, such different channel connection control fails to disclose or suggest the claimed present invention's, "a corresponding plurality of ... **different predetermined-correlated operation instructions that correspond to the predetermined event ... to operate image representations and/or physical representations of chat participants** that are ***linked to or installed in the chat device destinations.***"

INDEPENDENT CLAIM 1

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shio (US Patent No. 5,491,743) in view of Suzuki. See, page 5 of the Office Action. Shio is newly cited, and, thus, newly relied upon. Independent claim 1 is amended for clarity along the lines of the claim amendments in independent claims 5 and 10-12.

The Office Action rejection rationale in page 6, last paragraph, generally acknowledges that Shio fails to disclose the claimed present invention's, "determining at the chat administrator a plurality of **different correlated operation instructions that correspond to the detected event in the chat space** for ***operating the image representations and/or the physical representations of the chat participants linked or installed in the chat devices***, ~~based on the detected event~~" (e.g., amended independent claim 1). So the Examiner relies on Suzuki, which according to the foregoing concerning independent claims 5 and 10-12, also fails to disclose or suggest the patentably distinguishing features of independent claim 1. Therefore, independent claim 1 is allowable based upon the same rationale for independent claims 5 and 10-12.

CONCLUSION


In view of the foregoing remarks, withdrawal of the rejection of pending claims and allowance of pending claims is respectfully requested.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

Respectfully submitted,
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